

### This I Believe – Friendship

I remember my heart-to-heart conversation with Mavis, the sharing of our deep dark secrets was truly rewarding as we have each other to bear our heartaches and teenage pain. Kahil Gibran had once mentioned “Friendship is a sweet responsibility, never an opportunity”. Besides my family, friends occupy a special place in my life. It is probably the special characteristics of my friends that bond us together. However, I could not forget how awful and disappointing I felt when I learnt that my “good” friend has been backstabbing me all these while.

I looked at the pot of sunflowers in my bedroom window sill and thought of Mavis. She is my closest friend since primary school. I had believed that our friendship had grown with the passing of years just like the sunflowers which were grown from some seedlings she gave. In the same way as I had loved her so dearly, she had reciprocated by telling our schoolmates that I was her “little” sister. We were the inseparable “twins”.

As we were in the same class since Primary Four, we chatted a lot after school and sometimes we travelled together during the school holidays too. We enjoyed the intimacy and bond that had made some jealous and somewhat curious. In 2008, we had the same aggregate score for our PSLE examinations which secured us a place in the same prestigious one in town. We were placed in the same class once again.

During the Secondary One orientation, many were clad in our respective Primary School uniforms, but Mavis and I were holding hands as we went about exploring the school grounds. I marveled at the thought that we had each other. The prospect of doing school assignments together, learning together and sharing our secrets with each other was too good to be true.

Things took a turn once Mavis started making new friends. I began to realize that her new friends donned a certain uniform. She began her search for her own friends, neglecting me as times went by. Soon, there was a wedge in our relationship. Our conversations became curt and brief.

“What has happened to our friendship?” I bugged her continuously. “Why do you bother to go to those intelligent classmates of us? Are you avoiding me?” She curtly replied “I think it is about time we make new friends”. On hearing that, I felt cheated and hurt. That was the last line I heard from her before I stomped out of class that day.

Few weeks later, during our Secondary One camp closure, the class was roaring with laughters as some began to share their embarrassing moments. It was interesting that many shared openly. When it was Mavis’ turn to speak, I was totally dumbfounded with what she had shared. She decided to spill the beans and she told the class that I was initially hesitant about joining the school and thought that I could qualify for an IB school. When my name was mentioned and all eyes were on me, I screamed in my heart, “How

could she reveal my secret, our shared secret?" On that very day, Mavis let it out. I struggled to keep silent. "Should I also tell them that she had the same thought?"

I was pleased with myself back then for I had chosen to remain as her true friend as her secret remained safe with me. This is what I Believe. Friendship forms a sweet bond between people and it is meant to last. I hold strongly to the belief that friends stand by you always. Kahil Gibran urges a collaborative responsibility on the part of people to secure that bond and to make it last. I still have the same bitterness whenever I see Mavis with her new friends but I do sincerely believe that she will see that true friends are forever and I am still here for her.

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